

# Viejas Group of Capitan Grande Band of Mission Indians

**Preferred reference:** This band prefers to be referred to as the Viejas Band of Kumeyaay Indians.

## Elected Officials

**Chairman:** Robert J. Welch Jr. (elected in 2015)

**Vice Chairman:** Victor E. Woods

Tribal government officials are elected to four-year terms.

**Natural Resources Director:** Darwin "T" Tewanger (oversees the Environmental Protection Office)

**Land Base:** 1,609 acres

**Primary Economy:** Casino, hotel, outlets, and RV parks

**Population and Poverty (2010 Census):** 385 residents live on the Reservation; 25% of families live below the poverty level.

**Educational Attainment (of persons over 25):** 34.7% have at least a high school diploma, 4.6% a bachelor's degree, and 2.9% a graduate degree.

## EPA Funding (FY2017-18)

GAP	\$59,400
Clean Water Act 106	\$40,000



Chairman Welch



## Clean Water Act Grant Programs

**CWA 106 (Water Pollution Control):**

The Viejas Band received funding under CWA 106 for the first time in FY2017. Efforts under this grant have focused on developing a Quality Assurance Project Plan for surface water quality sampling, conducting initial water quality assessments, and establishing water quality indicators on the Reservation.

**Drinking Water:** Viejas has one public water system that serve both community and casino. The water system is in compliance. High iron and manganese are known water quality issues around that area, but they do not pose public health risk. Viejas is currently expanding its casino and hotel; however, the water storage and wells' capacity will be enough to meet future water demand. Therefore, Viejas is not considering expanding its drinking water facility at this time. There will be some turnover soon. Their water supervisor will retire around next Spring.

## Historic opposition to local wind energy projects

The Viejas Tribe had expressed opposition in the past to some proposed wind energy projects located on federal BLM lands near their reservation, (Ocotillo wind project in 2012), noting concerns with possible disturbance of artifacts and ceremonial grounds. EPA noted tribal concerns in our NEPA comment letter to BLM at that time. We are not aware of any current wind project proposals near the reservation. There is a proposed solar project nearby that has received some local community opposition, but we are not aware of any tribal opposition. EPA's NEPA office is not currently reviewing any solar or wind projects in the area at this time.

**Brief History:** The Viejas Band of Kumeyaay Indians, one of the remaining 12 bands of the Kumeyaay Indian Nation, resides on a 1,600-acre reservation in the Viejas Valley, east of the community of Alpine in San Diego County, California. The Kumeyaay, were the original native inhabitants of San Diego County and have lived in this region for more than 10,000 years. They were the people who greeted the Spanish when they first sailed into San Diego Harbor with the Juan Rodriguez Cabrillo expedition of 1542.

**GAP Progress to date:** The Viejas Band was awarded their first cooperative agreement with EPA in 2011. Currently, they are working on developing general administrative capacity as well as Tribal air quality, solid waste, and environmental education programs. They are also completing their Tribal Environmental Plan (TEP) as an important step to address Tribal priorities. The Tribe has had a lot of staff turnover in the Environmental Department in the past 2 years and consequently, some delays in accomplishments and consistency. Six new staff were hired in June 2017 to work on their environmental programs, including CWA and GAP.